



NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO WOMEN'S CENTRE
EMPOWERING WOMEN BY PROVIDING A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT TO EXPLORE THEIR NEEDS

feminist DISPATCH



The Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre is a non-profit, community-based feminist organization in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

We work with self-identified women to increase their access to knowledge, skills and resources so they can make informed choices.



If you're new to the Dispatch, or missed a few issues, past issues are archived on our [website](#).



January 4th was the 4th annual National Ribbon Skirt Day.

Young student Isabella Kulak was shamed for proudly wearing a ribbon skirt during a formal elementary school event in Saskatchewan in 2021. Senator Mary Jane McCallum subsequently put forward a bill to recognize National Ribbon Skirt Day, and January 4, 2023 marked the first one. This year, Governor General Mary Simon shared the [following message on National Ribbon Skirt Day](#):

In many Indigenous communities across Canada, women are the heart of the family. They are the life-givers and the keepers of culture.

The ribbon skirt has long been a symbol of womanhood, identity and resilience. Its colours and patterns tell the story of the wearer, and connects her spirit to the Earth. As an emblem of endurance and strength, it represents the revival of Indigenous traditions and culture after centuries of oppression.

It fills me with joy and hope for the future to see the ribbon skirt being made and worn by a new generation of women, girls and Two-Spirit peoples. This Ribbon Skirt Day, let us all embrace and celebrate the diverse customs that add to the beauty of our nation.
(Jan 4 2026)

Learn more:

- [Ribbon Skirt Day leader reflects on changes since her cultural attire was shamed](#) (CBC News, January 4 2026)
- [Indigenous designers are bringing fresh perspectives to the ribbon skirt tradition](#) (CBC Indigenous, January 4, 2024)
- [Understanding history, protocol important for allies who want to wear ribbon skirts: Advocates](#) (CBC Indigenous, January 4, 2023)
- [National Ribbon Skirt Day bill passed, to be celebrated on Jan. 4](#) (CBC Indigenous, December 23, 2022)
- [National Ribbon Skirt Day Act](#) (Government of Canada, 2022)
- [The Power of One: Isabella Kulak](#) (Kci-Niwesq, NWAC, March 2021)

Events & Programming updates from NWOC



Become a NOWC Sustaining Donor

For 2026, the NOWC has a goal of securing 10 new monthly donors! The first ten new monthly donors will receive a beautiful pin hand-crafted by local artisan Feral Wife (featured in the photo!)

Become a Sustaining Donor today!

Why consider becoming a monthly or sustaining donor?

By giving a small amount each month, you help create a consistent source of revenue that allows us to respond quickly to requests from women using the Centre, such as hygiene supplies, water bottles, bus passes, grocery cards, Good Food Coupons, winter gloves/hats. Monthly support also allows us to meet our increased rent expense and other costs associated with moving, plan specific programs, keep our resource centre updated, and build our LU Bursary fund.

For more information on how to set up a monthly Donation through Canada Helps or by PAD through your financial institution, visit our **'Donate' page** or contact Lori at admin@nwowc.org to arrange

Ornament Fundraiser with Clay Collective

Thank you to ***The Clay Collective NWO*** for hosting their annual ornament fundraiser in December, which raised over \$900 for the *Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre*.
Thank you to all who supported!



At the Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre, we believe survivors of sexual violence.

We are partnering with Faye Peterson House to offer a 6-part sexual violence education series. Sessions are open to self-identified women and girls (ages 18+) and will take place once a month from **6:30-8 pm at the Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre (278 Bay St, Suite #201).**

UPCOMING SESSIONS THIS NEW YEAR:

- **February 4, 2026 - Intimate Partner Sexual Violence** - Unpacking coercive sex and sexual violence in intimate relationships
- **March 4, 2026 - Trauma in your body** - Exploring mindful movement to foster acceptance and growth

Attendance at all sessions is not required. Bus tickets and light refreshments provided.
To register, please contact Gwen at ed@nwowc.org

WE BELIEVE SURVIVORS



Sexual Violence Education Group for Self-Identified Women



Join us for a free 6-part sexual violence education series.

October 1, 2025 - How do you know if it is sexual violence?

- What is consent – what it means. How to give it and get it

November 5, 2025 - No, you didn't "deserve it": the myth of the perfect victim

- Challenging assumptions that reinforce stereotypes and victim-blaming

December 3, 2025 - Sexual Violence in the Workplace

- Employment rights, legal options, and supports

January 7, 2026 - Online sexual violence

- How to recognize, resist, and report tech-facilitated sexual violence

February 4, 2026 - Intimate Partner Sexual Violence

- Unpacking coercive sex and sexual violence in intimate relationships

March 4, 2026 - Trauma in your body

- Exploring mindful movement to foster acceptance and growth

6:30 pm - 8:00 pm



**Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre
278 Bay St. Suite #201**

**Attendance for all sessions is not required.
Bus Tickets and Light Refreshments Provided.**

To register, please contact:

Gwen O'Reilly at ed@nwowc.org / 807-345-7802



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FAYE
PETERSON HOUSE



Craftivism at the Women's Centre



WORK ON THE WIPS GATHERING!

*Join us Feb 5th from 1-4pm
at the NOWC (278 Bay St, Suite 201)*

*Bring any WIP (work in progress) project
you are currently working on for this Craft-ernoon!*

*Drop in or contact Lori to RSVP
admin@nwowc.org*

Working on the WIPs: Come craft together!

Join us for a WORK ON THE WIPS Craftivism Gathering on **Thursday, February 5th from 1-4pm** **at the at the Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre** (278 Bay St, Suite 201 – please note we have moved!) You are welcome to bring any WIP (work in progress) project you are currently working on. Refreshments, snacks, and good company provided! Please note we are not providing supplies for projects, just a space to work in community :)

For information on this crafting event and more, contact Lori at admin@nwowc.org or by phone at 807-935-8043



**GOOD
FOOD** BOX

With a new year, we have a the 2026 GFB Order schedule available!

Get your 2026 Order schedule

GOOD FOOD BOX		2026 Order Schedule		FIND US ONLINE!			
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Order by May 11th to pick up your box on the 20th		Order by June 8th to pick up your box on the 17th		Order by Nov 8th to pick up your box on the 15th		Order by Dec 7th to pick up your box on the 15th	

Thank you to NelliGelli's Rinky Dinky Fundraiser

Thank you to Rylie and Eric of the NelliGelli's Rinky-Dink Fundraiser for choosing the Good Food Box Program to support through with their 4th annual community fundraiser!

The fundraising skate raised \$3,405 for the GFB – thank you for your support, it is greatly appreciated!



THE RESULTS ARE IN!

NelliGelli's
RINKY-DINK FUNDRAISER

With your amazing generosity, our 4th annual fundraiser skate raised:

\$3,405

for the Good Food Box!

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts, and we hope to see you all again next year!

xoxo
The NelliGelli's

GFB February Fundraising Box COMING SOON

To raise funds in support of our GFB program operations, the Women's Centre sells fundraiser boxes of local goods several times a year.

We are curating a special **TREAT YOURSELF: SELF-CARE BOX** for the next Fundraiser. We will announce more on our **Instagram** and **Facebook** pages, be sure to follow us there! Pick up date will be FEB

Learn more about GFB Fundraisers!

Community Events & Resources

Community Events

- **Family Art Days** at the **Thunder Bay Art Gallery**: join on the **first Sunday of each month from 1-4pm** for a FREE fun and creative family art day at the gallery. All Ages and everyone is welcome, and no experience is needed—just bring your imagination and enjoy an inspiring day!
- **Drop-In Beading** at the **Thunder Bay Public Library**: **every 2nd Friday from 1-4pm at Brodie branch** and **every 2nd Tuesday 5:30-7:30pm at the Waverly branch**. Join an inclusive drop-in beading program celebrating Indigenous artistry! All skill levels welcome. Learn, share, and create beautiful beadwork rooted in tradition. All materials provided. No experience needed!

Resources

- **Extended hours are in effect!** The **Care Bus** will be operating from **9:30AM – 9:30PM throughout January & February**. The bus is free for anyone that needs a safe place to stay warm and get around town. You can get in touch with an Outreach Worker during operating hours by calling 807-632-9732.
- **P.A.C.E. Warming Centre** is now open every day: **weekdays from 8am - 8:30pm and weekends from 9am - 8:30pm**.
- **Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses** reviews mainstream media reports of femicides and shares a snapshot of their research monthly. Their **2024-2025 Mainstream Media Analysis** is now available, additional insights can be found on their [website](#)
- Join **CLEO Connect** for a free webinar “WSIB 101: What you need to know” on **Tuesday, January 20th at 12pm EST. Register today!**
- Join **CLEO Connect** for a free webinar, "Understanding the Disability Tax Credit and Canada Disability Benefit" on **Wednesday, January 28th at 12pm EST. Register today!**

Gender Based Violence: We Can Help

Our Gender Based Violence Navigation Advocate provides support for women who are experiencing (or at risk of experiencing) physical and/or sexual violence or coercive control by a partner, family member or acquaintance. Women navigating various court systems may also access court advocacy.

We can help by:

- Ensuring that women who are experiencing or at high risk of gender-based violence have access to ongoing and appropriate support and referrals
- Coordinating with Violence Against Women service providers to ensure that critical information is shared
- Assisting with preparing for court
- Ensuring coordination between legal sectors (criminal, family, immigration etc.)
- Providing court accompaniment and emotional support

This service is intended to enhance the effectiveness of the existing VAW response, not duplicate or replace it. For more information or to make a referral, contact Gwen at ed@nwowc.org or by phone (807) 345-7802.

Sexual Violence Program: Supporting Survivors

To help meet the needs of survivors since the Thunder Bay Sexual Abuse Centre closed, Faye Peterson House has developed a Sexual Violence Program. There are three Sexual Violence Counsellors offering a 20-week individual counselling program.

To access counselling for any kind of sexual violence (recent or past), you can call Faye Peterson House's 24/7 Crisis Line: (807) 345-0450. You do not need to reside at the shelter to access support from Faye Peterson House.



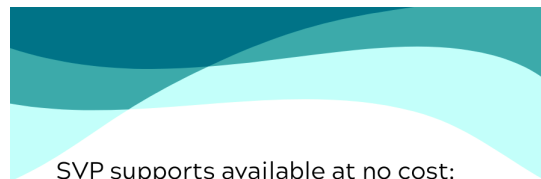
Sexual Violence Program

Our Sexual Violence Program supports self-identified women aged 16+ who have experienced any form of sexual violence in person or online: sexual abuse, sexual assault, sexual harassment, non-consensual distribution of intimate images, stalking or sex trafficking.

We aim to provide survivors with:

- a space to be heard, believed, and supported
- legal and systems advocacy, when appropriate
- free supportive counselling and other resources to rebuild their lives from the negative impacts of sexual violence

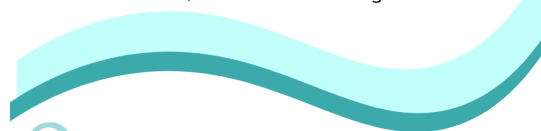
www.fayepeterson.org



SVP supports available at no cost:

- 24/7 crisis line: (807) 345-0450
- 10-week support groups
- Accompaniments (hospital, police, court), where appropriate
- Advocacy
- Referrals
- Public education
- 20-week individual counselling offered at two locations:
 - Faye Peterson House (807) 345-0450
 - Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre (807) 620-9156

Our SVP is designed to serve the diverse experiences of members of our communities, including, but not limited to, Indigenous/Metis/Inuit, 2-Spirited, non-binary, LGBTQ, Black/racialized, disabled, sex workers, and sex trafficking survivors.



For more details about all of our programs and services, please visit:

www.fayepeterson.org



In partnership with:
Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre

www.nwowomenscentre.org



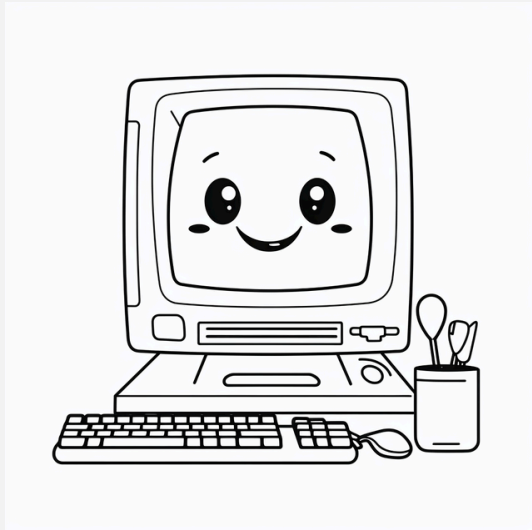
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While we continue to advocate for changes to policies and practices that make women disproportionately vulnerable to violence and poverty, we know that access to some basic material items can still be helpful. We also recognize the importance of taking care of one another, and we know that many NOWC supporters might appreciate an opportunity to extend support to women in our community in other ways. Informed by our conversations with women who visit the Centre, these items would be especially helpful lately:

- Bus tickets, such as a **10 Ride Multipass**
- new socks
- Fresh Co. or Tim Hortons gift cards
- mini first aid kits (or packs of Band-Aids)
- toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, lip balm
- menstrual pads (light or regular)
- Poise pads (for incontinence)

If you'd like to donate any of these items, please drop by the Women's Centre (M-Th between 9:30am and 5pm) or get in touch with Steph to make alternate arrangements: communications@nwowc.org.



Computer Resources Available

Women can access a computer or video conferencing at the Women's Centre for:

- Printing forms
- Job Interviews
- Virtual Legal Clinic
- Lawyer's Appointments
- Virtual Court Matters

To book an appointment, please contact Gwen at ed@nwowc.org

Contribute to the Feminist Dispatch!

Submit a photo of your original artwork, a short piece of writing, a helpful resource, or a link to a community event that aligns with our **mission**! All newsletter-related inquiries and submissions can be directed to communications@nwowc.org.

Helping Women Find Their Way Since 1973!

The Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre relies on government funding and private donations to continue our work. We gratefully acknowledge the support of volunteers, donors, and the Investing in Women's Future Program of the Ontario Ministry of Children,

Support Our Work

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Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre

278 Bay Street, Suite #201, Thunder Bay, ON P7B 1R8

(807) 345-7802 | ed@nwowc.org

www.nwowomenscentre.org



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